

Kentucky Adult Education Advisory Committee

Minutes

December 8, 2006

The following members attended:

Bill Bates, Vicki Boyd, S.J. Brennan, Cris Crowley, Kathryn Hardman, Sarah Hornback, Margenia Keeton, JoEllen Mitchell, Julie Scoskie, Lisa Stethen, Bill Teegarden, Bev Thomson, Jonell Tobin and Sugar Willey.

The following members did not attend:

Patty Craig, Brenda Morris and Rocky Wallace.

KYAE staff in attendance:

Sarah Hawker, Reecie Stagnolia, B.J. Helton, Janet Hoover, Sandy Kestner, Marilyn Lyons, Terry Pruitt, David Walters, Joyce Bullock, Martha Fightmaster, Linda Pankratz, Donna Potter and Amanda Walker.

Welcome and Introductions

Sarah Hawker stressed the importance of regularly scheduled meetings to cover important, timely topics. It's also important for KYAE to hear what is going on in the field. She reemphasized that the meeting is a safe environment and the floor was open for free discussion.

Review of Minutes

The group liked the level of detail in the meeting minutes and asked to keep the same format. The group listed some changes – S.J. Hollon to S.J. Brennan; courtesy title on Stuart Johnston's name.

Meetings will begin at 10 a.m. The next meeting was set for March 16, 2007.

Kentucky Adult Educator's Literacy Institute (KAELI) – Phase II

Sarah Hawker and Sandy Kestner led a discussion on the future of KAELI.

Lisa Stethen said National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) training better met her program's needs, because it was more intensive and hands-on than KAELI training.

Kathryn Hardman indicated KAELI lessons are being implemented, but KAELI-trained teachers don't have time to impact everyone. Realistically, a teacher can only teach a certain number of students – not everyone.

JoEllen Mitchell said Laubach is a good tool and inexpensive, while KAELI increases awareness.

Cris Crowley agreed with KAELI in theory, but said implementation is not always possible. When teachers are spending 50-70 hours on a KAELI PowerPoint, what is that teaching them? The 50 hours could be better spent in other ways. KAELI-trained

staff have overall better understanding, but no plan, no integrated approach to reading and writing.

Jonell Tobin explained that KAELI came out of the Adult Education Task Force, but it was not implemented as it was envisioned. At the last minute, the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD) was created in legislation and KAELI became one small component of CCLD.

Sugar Willey said her KAELI instructor spent 13-20 hours a week on KAELI activities – time for which Sugar couldn't pay her. Her program did extract many good strategies – Book Club, gains in middle areas – but indicted it is a big burden on the program.

Jonell Tobin said Morehead was supposed to be the leader in adult education professional development, but it was diluted. The idea was to seek degrees and raise professionalism. She also expressed support for tuition waivers for adult educators.

Bill Teegarden said the training should be substantive and delivered in a reasonable amount of time instead of outside work not pertinent to his program. The tutor training (12 hours – 3 hours for reading, 3 hours of math, 3 hours of learning disabilities and 3 hours of program management) would be an excellent grounding for new instructors. He also expressed support for a certification program for adult education. Bill added most programs do not have luxury of having teachers committed to only one subject, so all teachers should have the training – not just one.

Julie Scoskie added volunteers should be trained if we expect to impact reading scores. The Wilson Reading System is an intensive, elaborate training, but is expensive.

Sandy asked about having a reading resource and teacher/specialist in each region. KYAE could identify teachers/specialists as points of contact when issues arose or guidance was needed.

Kathryn Hardman said volunteers were looked down on in the effort to professionalize adult education. Upgrading the professionalism of adult education was good, but volunteers were the victims of the upgrading process.

Bill Bates said KAELI is particularly tough for small counties. For example, Lee County has only two instructors. With turnover, his program has already trained two instructors who have since left the program.

Cris Crowley recommended providing programs with options rather than developing one solution and try to make it work in all 120 counties. She suggested KYAE require each county to develop reading expertise and provide options for them to meet the requirement.

Jonell Tobin suggested that KYAE could use KAELI to do county-level training.

Sarah Hawker thanked the group for their ideas and suggestions and indicated it was good to identify what KAELI is not providing. She said the discussion needed to continue with a subcommittee to address and propose next steps.

Regional Meetings Report

David Walters reported on the KYAE regional meetings. KYAE sees the meetings as one way to establish an open dialogue with the field.

Math Initiative

Sarah Hawker led a discussion of a new KYAE math initiative and described the Northern Kentucky University Math Institute. Marilyn Lyons provided a chart that included GED math scores.

JoEllen Mitchell said her opinions were consistent with those concerning KAELI – any math professional development should be substantive and have variety. She is concerned about whether her instructors will need advanced math content.

Bev Thomson said high school students come in with poor math skills, and some don't even know the multiplication tables. If there's an expectation for adult educators to have calculus, which is not a requirement for the GED, it will be hard to find teachers. She added we have a limited amount of funding and can't solve every problem.

The group expressed the opinion that the GED does not prep students for college. To be ready for college, students must be taken a step further. However, it can't be assumed that adult education instructors have the math content needed.

Bill Teegarden said even people who have a GED or high school diploma still need our help, and we can save them lots of money.

Julie Scoskie said that transition efforts are working great in pockets, but we'd like to see it consistent across state.

Sarah Hawker reported on the Developmental Education Task Force and said this issue has arisen. Adult education's core mission is to provide skills up to certain level, which is not college-level. Some universities fear KYAE wants to take over developmental education; others want us to take it over. What is our appropriate role? What are the skill levels? How do we determine that level? How do you get paid for it?

JoEllen Mitchell pointed out that the federal standard for enrollment is 11.9 and below on the TABE. Also, under federal law for the Pell Grant is 9th grade, but this is sometimes ignored.

S.J. Brennan said adult educators do not have the capacity to take on all developmental education students.

Kathryn Hardman pointed out that the Adult Education Task Force said not to run just a federal program but to do what Kentucky needs.

Julie Scoskie said employers look at educational attainment levels and Kentucky needs to have more people with a high school credential to move the economy and the state forward. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) should not accept anyone without a high school credential. We cannot use the COMPASS–TABE crosswalk anymore, so students must be tested again. Jefferson County makes it seamless, because there's a stigma associated with adult *basic* education.

Jonell Tobin said adults who need four to five developmental education courses typically get discouraged, drop out, and have used Pell Grant funding.

Sarah Hornback asked if KCTCS refers to adult education, would they refer students to other counties? Are adult education instructors proficient enough in math themselves to teach it? Teachers need to be prepared in content.

Bev Thomson and Cris Crowley said they give a math assessment (either TABE or WorkKeys) to all prospective instructors. Sandy Kestner suggested also using the Kentucky Early Mathematics Testing Program (KEMTP).

Kathryn Hardman said we could assume that some professional development needs to be focused on the acquisition of math skills – not just teaching strategies.

Sarah Hawker said teachers should not think we are accusing them or judging them, but we do need to get an evaluation of the knowledge base.

Family Literacy

Sarah Hawker and Janet Hoover led a discussion of family literacy and told the group that KYAE is considering new policy directives.

Janet Hoover shared that family literacy had been a major topic of interest at each of the recent regional meetings. Providers were asking about the future of family literacy. She shared that KYAE has an internal workgroup looking at data and policy. She also reviewed family literacy changes in the current year that were determined after a provider focus group in the spring of 2006 – discontinuation of contact with the child's teacher and documentation for children's component was streamlined. She asked the group to share family literacy struggles, barriers, successes and challenges.

JoEllen Mitchell said family literacy is a struggle and is stressful. Some counties have had success with tying family literacy to English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Many programs have to beg for space and referrals, and many can't get families to come. At the same time, programs can't afford to lose the \$20,000 in family literacy funding.

Sarah Hornback said family literacy funding is a wonderful supplement to Even Start funding. She can't imagine providing the level of services that these families need without this level of funding. If we are truly going to focus on improving and not just the numbers, it will require more funding.

Kathryn Hardman said her program enrolls everyone who has a child to try to meet the ratcheted up numbers.

Bill Teegarden's concern is that county size and population are not taken into consideration when setting enrollment goals. Robertson is the smallest county in Kentucky, but has the same requirement as Mason County – 20 families. This is expecting something that will not happen.

Sarah Hawker summarized the discussion – family literacy is stressful, difficult, funding has been blended, and enrollment goals have been increased. What are our options now? What do we want family literacy to be in Kentucky? Should it be required in every county or in just those counties that are interested in it? Should it be funded separately?

S.J. Brennan shared that Breathitt County has had a lot of success with family literacy. Instructors really enjoy it, and students get the most from it. She indicated her family literacy students were more likely to come to class and persist; and if students are coming, they are more likely to be coming for other services. Other KVEC counties don't have same success and would probably elect to not carry on; however, Breathitt County wants the option to continue offering family literacy.

JoEllen Mitchell said family literacy is a wonderful program and should be optional but without taking money out of county budgets.

Jonell Tobin expressed the opinion that family literacy should be optional. Programs need to do family literacy and some do it well. Some counties would graciously give funding back, if they didn't have to deal with family literacy.

Kathryn Hardman asked why schools are not required to bring the adult education component into their service rather than the other way around. She said adult education is mandated to offer a child component with family literacy services, but the K-12 system is not required to offer an adult component. She made the point that when she helps someone earn a GED, she has helped the entire family, regardless of their participation in family literacy. JoEllen Mitchell agreed and said adult educators cannot provide overall family literacy services by ourselves.

Bev Thompson made a strong statement in support of family literacy. She said family literacy is the only way we will break the cycle of illiteracy and that adult educators can see this need better than other educators. It's important at the state level to make school districts more responsible to have parent involvement.

Sugar Wiley shared that Woodford County has a successful ESL family literacy program and support from the schools. But she said counties need to have a choice and that childcare and transportation issues must be addressed to be successful.

Sarah Hawker asked about the enrollment goal. Julie Scoskie replied that the goals are both a blessing and a curse. She would continue to do family literacy, but programs need options. If there was a separate pot of money, counties could apply for those funds.

Janet Hoover urged the group to contact her if they had more suggestions or comments regarding family literacy.

Follow-ups from September Meeting and Updates:

Test Readiness Workgroup

BJ Helton updated the group that KYAE was considering whether there needs to be a measure besides the GED Official Practice Test and is in the process of reviewing data. Bill Teegarden said if someone fails the GED test, he or she should not be able to take it again without coming back to adult education.

P-16 Councils

Reecie Stagnolia discussed handouts in the packet, specifically the P-16 map.

Local Workforce Boards

Reecie reviewed materials in the packet and advised providers to contact KYAE to be put on mailing lists.

2007 Regional Conferences

Sarah confirmed that KYAE would be having 2007 Regional Conferences. Kathryn Hardman suggested alternating between statewide and regional conferences each year.

Jonell Tobin announced KAACE's legislative luncheon and encouraged adult educators to attend.

Meeting Evaluation

The group was asked to fill out evaluation and expense voucher forms before leaving.

Addendum

The March 16, 2007 meeting was postponed to April 13, 2007.